



Week of Jan. 7 – Jan. 13, 2009

Enlisted promotions

Study... cram... test... wait. So goes the enlisted promotion process. Whether testing for the first time or the fourth time, Airmen endure this process every year.

The purpose of promotion testing is to measure Airmen's specialty and general military knowledge—in conjunction with other weighted criteria—to determine promotion to the next rank. Here are some things Airmen should consider about the enlisted promotion process:

- Promotions are very competitive. The Department of Defense limits the number of Airmen who may serve in the top five grades (staff through chief master sergeant), and public law further limits the grades of senior and chief master sergeant to only 3.5 percent of the enlisted force. As such, the Air Force uses the Weighted Airman Promotion System to ensure eligible Airmen have a chance to be promoted.
- Promotion is an individual responsibility and completely up to you. From staff to master sergeant, promotions in the Air Force are based largely on individual performance, as reflected on Enlisted Performance Reports and WAPS testing. The WAPS testing portions determine individuals' general Air Force knowledge and specific career field knowledge, which are weighed equally. Other weighted factors include time in grade, time in service and decorations. Airmen must ensure their records are accurate and up to date prior to testing for promotion.
- It's worth the wait. There are a few reasons Airmen must wait for promotion results. Strict procedures are used for handling and scoring promotion tests to prevent loss or compromise. All tests are electronically scored, and a percentage is also hand-scored at random to verify accuracy. Airmen's records must also be reviewed at Air Force Personnel Center to ensure they are eligible for promotion.
- Stripes for Exceptional Performers (STEP) and Below-the-Zone (BTZ) are two programs used to recognize and promote outstanding Airmen. Airmen can be STEP promoted to the grades of staff through master sergeant. BTZ is designed to promote exceptional airmen 1st class to senior airmen six months early.

Whether it's your first or fourth time testing, study hard and make it count. Being prepared falls directly in line with the core value "Excellence in all we do!"

Find Airman's Roll Call Online Here: <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/>

Airman's Roll Call is designed for supervisors at all levels to help keep Airmen informed on current issues, clear up confusion, dispel rumors, and provide additional face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams.